

When Presentation Supersedes Doctrine, Part 4 - 1 Corinthians 2:9-11 – May 4th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series we began about a month ago now that I've entitled "When Presentation Supersedes Doctrine."
- If you're anything like me you're probably just as taken back as I am by what the Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians here in this chapter.
- More specifically, the gnarly way in which he communicates to them how he, of his own volition, chose to approach them in a certain way.

- I see Paul being sort of hypersensitive to how they had esteemed the oratory eloquence and wisdom of man over and above God's Word.
- And, this for good reasons, chief of which are the many problems that ensue in the life of a church corporately, and a Christian individually.
- So much so unless Paul, by the Holy Spirit, confronts it head on it single handedly has the potential to endanger both them and the church.

1. It comes at the expense of the Gospel (Verses 1-2)

- The reason Paul didn't come with eloquence or superior wisdom was he resolved to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

2. It empties out the power of the Gospel (Verses 3-5)

- He says he came in weakness and fear with much trembling in his preaching so their faith wouldn't rest on men's wisdom but God's power.

3. It competes with the wisdom of God (Verses 6-8)

- He says it was God's wisdom, not man's wisdom, which was hidden, among the mature, because the world's wisdom is coming to nothing.
- He takes it a step further saying, none of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord Jesus.
- Here's the danger with this, crossbreeding worldly wisdom with Godly wisdom creates a hybrid Christianity, and as such shallow Christians.

4. It hampers the deep things of God (Verses 9-11)

- v9 Paul paraphrases Isaiah 64:4 saying no eye has seen nor ear heard nor mind conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.
- v10 He says, "however, God has revealed it to us by His Spirit." He then says, "The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."
- v11 Paul compares knowing the thoughts of man by the spirit of man within us to the thoughts of God by way of the Spirit of God within us.

- It's important to note how that Paul is saying this in the present tense, such that God has already revealed to us by His Spirit here and now.
- The reason I point this out is that it's germane to our understanding of that which is available to those of us who know, and love the Lord.
- Namely, the deep things of God that He Himself has prepared for us and revealed to us, things not just anyone can see, hear, or conceive.

- Herein lies the problem, such that, this would seem to indicate that there are two types of Christians. Either we are shallow, or we're deep.
- Let me explain, the eloquent presentation by man, and the charismatic personality of man, creates a hybrid Christianity, and a shallow one.
- This would seem to explain why it is that Paul is being so meticulous in communicating this to them and also in his delineating this for them.

- Simply put this is the litmus test by which one can discern if a church and or a Christian has opted for the charisma and the wisdom of man.
- Perhaps better said, show me a shallow Christian or church, and I'll show you a Christian that's put the spirit of man over the Spirit of God.
- Sadly, when a Christian or a church does that, they rob themselves of any depth of character that comes packaged with a spiritual maturity.

Charles Spurgeon - "What reason and imagination could not have conceived, the Holy Spirit has revealed; spiritual men have an inner eye and ear to which the Spirit grants discernment."

- Now I'm keenly aware there might be some who right about now are thinking to themselves, "What's the big deal, so what if I'm not deep?"
- After all I've been a Christian for many years and I seem to be doing just fine. To this I'd lovingly say you have no idea what you're missing.
- By that I mean, you have no idea what knowing God in such an intimate and deep way is like, for if you did, you couldn't live any other way.

- When God reveals Himself to me, and I taste the deep things of God, it spoils me, ruins me, for Him, in that I have no appetite for the world.
- However, God will not reveal those deep things to those He foreknows will reject it. If He did He would become party to our disobedience.
- Just as we cannot know anything about anyone until and unless they reveal it, so too we can't know anything about God until He reveals it.

- I say that, to say this, we desperately need God to reveal those deep things to us, and here's why, being shallow will distort our worldview.
- In other words, we won't have that "inner eye and ear to which the Spirit grants discernment," as Spurgeon says, in how we see the world.
- Then, not if, the storms in this fallen world hit, we'll topple over like a tree with shallow roots that weren't deep in the soil of sound doctrine.

I like how one commentator said it, "We see things others don't. We hear things others can't because the Holy Spirit ministers to our spirits concerning spiritual truth. As a result, we look at the world around us entirely differently. For example, the spiritual man says, 'No matter what the forecasters are predicting economically, the Scriptures tell me God shall supply all my needs, according to His riches'. So, too, when the news anchors tell us the Middle East is heating up and that conflict is about to erupt once more, I already know what the political pundits can only guess at—that the armies of the world will indeed converge upon the Middle East and that there will be a battle ultimately."

This begs the question of how can I know the deep things of God? The answer is, the deep things of God come vis-à-vis our brokenness by God. I happened upon a quote from a missionary to Algeria by the name of Lilius Trotter who of this said, "Before God can get us to the place where He can send [Jesus] through us in a steady tide, we have to go lower than we dreamed of at first: and He may have to stop using us for a time, that He may deepen His work within, and bring us to utter brokenness... "We may know that we are earthen pitchers, like Gideon's, with nothing of our own but the light within, and yet we may not have passed through the shattering that sends the light forth."

- I'll close saying something you tire of me saying "I'd rather have a church an inch wide and a mile deep than a mile wide and an inch deep."
- Moreover, I aspire to be a Christian and perhaps more importantly, a Pastor, that's an inch wide and mile deep instead of being visa versa.
- This because of the "why" behind the "what" on two fronts, the first of which is God's goodness, and the second is the world's wickedness.